



Being the best for our children:

Releasing talent for teaching and learning



department for
children, schools and families

Unlocking talent

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Summary

Our ambitions for our society and our economy are high, because the challenges we face as a country are high. The rewards for success are great; the consequences of failure severe. Nowhere is this more so than for our children, whom we have a responsibility to equip with the skills that will help them to thrive in the face of the challenges that this century will pose. At the forefront will be schools. This document is about the action we will take to ensure that those who work in the 21st Century School have the talent and skills needed to meet those challenges.

Our investment in the school workforce has resulted in a significant increase in its size and improvement in quality. It is without doubt a workforce to be proud of. But we know that in order to excel, the 21st Century School will need recruits of ever higher quality. Our existing routes into the profession will continue to make a major contribution but we will continue to need to find innovative ways of attracting high quality recruits into the school workforce. Teach First is an example of what can be done. We are now launching Transition to Teaching to bring new skills into the classroom.

Standards of leadership are high, but need to be higher. What it means to be a well-led school will continue to evolve as our vision of a 21st Century School is realised. We need to ensure that the right qualifications and standards structure is in place to support this evolution. But, again, there must be a particular focus on ensuring that the highest quality of leadership is to be found in the schools with the greatest challenges. Programmes such as Future Leaders have an increasing part to play in helping us do this and we are now expanding the National Leaders of Education Programme.

No profession will be able to meet the demands of the new century without the strongest commitment to its own continued development. This is especially true of teachers and those who support them in the task of equipping our young people for life in a fast changing world. We will continue to work with partners to ensure that the infrastructure is in place to support effective professional development. Government will continue to invest through the National Strategies, through supporting subject specific development and the teaching of children with SEN and disabilities. But we want to make a step change in the status and capacity of the teaching profession by bringing in a new Masters qualification for all.

We will introduce a wholly new programme leading to a Masters qualification, known as 'Masters in Teaching and Learning' (MTL). Our aim is that the qualification over time should be open to all teachers and our expectation is that every teacher would want to complete it at some stage in their career. We need to ensure that quality finds its way to where its most needed, including where the greatest challenges are to be found. Our new Masters programme should play a significant part in achieving this objective, and we will explore what else is needed.

Introduction

Our children and young people need a higher level of skills than ever before in order to deal with the social, cultural and technological changes that they will face throughout their lives. The 21st Century School has an essential part to play in fostering the talent and aspirations of today's young people and equipping them to meet these challenges successfully and to enjoy a better quality of life.

The Children's Plan sets out a vision for the 21st Century School which is a place of excellent teaching and learning and contributes to all aspects of a child's life – health and wellbeing, safety and developing the wider experiences and skills that characterise a good childhood and set a young person up for success in adulthood. It is a place where parents are partners in their child's learning and development and where emerging problems can be identified and addressed early and swiftly. It is also a vital community resource, working in partnership with other schools and services to ensure that local children and young people have access to the best possible opportunities and support.

We already have a high quality school workforce that has achieved significant improvements in teaching and learning and that is passionately committed to improving the lives of children and young people. The ambition of the Children's Plan is that it should be world class – and part of a wider children's workforce that is also world class. We will be publishing an Action Plan for everyone who works with children and young people later in the year which will address issues such as quality and integration across the workforce. The measures we are announcing for the school workforce in this document sit within a wider aspiration to enhance further the skills and the capacity of all those who work with children and young people.

We are fortunate to be building on success. We can be proud of what our school workforce has achieved. The ground-breaking *Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: a National Agreement* and creation of the social partnership between the Government, Local Government Employers, ASCL, ATL, GMB, NAHT, NASUWT, T&G section of Unite, Unison, Voice (formally PAT) and the Welsh Assembly Government has been central to these achievements. This agreement led to further detailed work on pay and conditions of service to recognise and reward teachers and head teachers as highly skilled professionals. The social partnership will continue to be central to the development and delivery of our future plans.

The challenge now – and the opportunity – is to make our school workforce the very best so that it can do the very best for our children. We have made huge progress, but to keep pace with our international competitors we need to set our sights higher still – to further improve the quality of those entering the profession, to close the achievement gap by getting the best teachers in the most challenging schools and to equip our workforce with the capacity to continue to learn and develop.

This document briefly rehearses our key plans for doing that by recruiting more of the most talented into the school workforce and ensuring we have systems that promote quality and can make a difference where it matters most. It then sets out our specific plans for building on current success and for further improving the status and expertise of the teaching profession by making teaching a Masters level profession.



Developing the school workforce

The scale of investment in the school workforce is significant. It has increased in size and changed significantly since 1997. The quality of entrants to the school workforce is high. Teaching is the second most popular career choice for UK graduates and already attracts large numbers of high quality applicants. We have the best school leaders we have ever had. Ofsted rate 64% of primary and 62% of secondary schools as good or outstanding, both improvements on last year (2006-07 Ofsted Annual Report). With the introduction of the redesigned National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), we have set the standards for headship high.

Changes to teachers' contracts have helped them to focus on teaching – making a difference to their workload and helping to make teaching a more attractive career option alongside positive trends in teachers' pay. School support staff also deserve fair rewards for the jobs they do and there should be a nationally consistent approach to support staff pay and conditions. From September 2008 Ministers intend to establish a new body that will provide a framework for all schools in England to use when determining school support staff pay and conditions, and further support remodelling in schools.

A range of initiatives are helping to attract high quality recruits into the school workforce and to fill leadership positions. This includes Teach First and the new Transition to Teaching programme.

Teach First is an innovative recruitment programme designed to attract, select, train, place and support top graduates to work in challenging schools in deprived areas, and then, if they choose not to stay in teaching, to go on to work for leading employers. Its aim is to build a body of outstanding leaders in all sectors of society, with the skills, resources, networks and knowledge to help tackle educational inequalities and their root causes. Launched in London in 2003, Teach First has now been extended to challenging schools in other areas across the country. Over 50% of Teach First participants choose to stay on beyond two years and there are now over 100 Teach First participants in management positions in challenging schools in London.

We are launching Transition to Teaching to bring industry and Government together to encourage people with science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) expertise who are considering a change of career to bring their knowledge and enthusiasm to the classroom. Prospective applicants will be given a package of tailored advice and support to identify whether their skills are transferable to teaching, and if so, which initial teacher training route might be most appropriate.

Each school presents its own unique set of challenges for those working there and the rapidly changing economic and social climate sets a challenging agenda for all. Nevertheless, we need to recognise that in some schools the challenges faced by the workforce are particularly complex and that different solutions are needed. This document says more later about the sort of contribution that our new Masters proposals could make to improving the quality of teaching and learning in our most complex schools, including providing incentives for joint working or secondments between schools facing different challenges. In addition to this, we are keen to work with the profession to get a better understanding of what further support might be needed to improve the workforce's ability to meet the needs of these schools.

The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) has commissioned independent research into the barriers to teacher recruitment and retention in the toughest schools. The initial report is due in April this year and the final report, involving input from over 500 teachers and which will make recommendations for further action, is due in June this year. We will want to feed in these recommendations into our consideration of these issues.

Depending on available resources some of the options we will want to consider as part of a package of measures include:

- Financial incentives, such as extending or refocusing Golden Hello payments from the current eligibility criteria (shortage subjects) to the most challenging schools; and introducing Golden Handcuffs for teachers staying in a specific school for a minimum period of time (this could also be linked to the take-up of STEM posts);
- The provision of better support and guidance, such as mentoring and coaching for new teachers;
- Whether it is possible and helpful to provide key worker type accommodation for newly qualified teachers moving to London or other near-inner city areas to take up post in specified schools;
- Other measures which could promote the benefits of training to teach and teaching in some of our major cities, including London, where some (but not all) of the most complex and challenging schools are to be found.

We know that we need our most talented, outstanding leaders to work with these schools to help them fulfil our promise to help all young people reach their potential and close the attainment gap. The National Leaders of Education Programme (which harnesses the skills and knowledge of our best leaders) and the Future Leaders Programme have brought a radically new approach to the development of urban school leaders.

The evidence to date shows that National Leaders of Education are having a positive impact in the schools that they are supporting as well as their own schools improving at the same time. Ofsted reports are encouraging – standards have risen, some schools have been brought out of special measures and sustainable long-term strategies are being put in place. We will expand the coverage of the National Leaders of Education Programme and the support that schools are offered.

The Future Leaders Programme combines rigorous training focused on the needs of urban challenging schools with a residency year that enables participants to put their skills into practice as part of the senior leadership team in a successful inner-city school. It is already helping address the recruitment challenges in London with Future Leaders filling a third of the Deputy Head positions advertised in London in 2007.

Alongside these measures we have started to put a national framework in place that will maintain and promote quality across the school workforce. Last September we introduced revised arrangements for teachers' and head teachers' performance management which ensure that all teachers and head teachers have annual performance reviews, receive regular feedback as part of an ongoing professional dialogue, and agree plans that reflect their development needs, career aspirations and the school's improvement priorities.

The revised framework of professional standards for teachers provides a backdrop to the performance management process. We are working with social partners and the National College of School Leadership (NCSL) to develop a new set of leadership standards, not just for head teachers but for all school leaders. The revised National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Teaching and Learning for teaching/classroom assistants and revised Professional Standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) complete the picture.

Investing in skills

The story on recruitment and performance is a strong one but we know that we must do more to ensure the school workforce has the skills it needs to help our children and young people to meet the challenges of a fast-changing world. This is true for the current generation of children and it is certainly true for the future. Looking ahead, it is impossible for anyone entering the school workforce in 2008 to anticipate the challenges that children will face in 2050. The school workforce needs the capacity to respond, adapt and change and that means all its members need to continue to develop themselves.

We believe all teachers should have a professional responsibility to be engaged in effective, sustained and relevant professional development throughout their careers and a contractual entitlement to effective, sustained and relevant professional development. We will be exploring with social partners how to frame a contractual entitlement to continuous professional development (CPD) so it best supports teachers' professional development. We will be working with the TDA and the NCSL to refresh the three year strategy on support staff skills and professional development for school support staff will be a key strand of the work with partners as we move beyond the setting up of a new negotiating body.

There is considerable investment in the development of the school workforce through the National Strategies and through a range of other initiatives, including support for subject specialisms and for the teaching of children with SEN and disabilities.

The National Strategies will remain the key delivery mechanism for raising standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics (primary and secondary) and science (secondary only) by providing free CPD in these important areas, together with teaching resources and hands-on consultancy support. They also provide training and support for many other Departmental standards initiatives, for example, providing training and materials to help teachers deal effectively with behaviour and attendance issues, early years and to address underperformance amongst particular groups.

Funding is being made available through the Standards Fund so every school should have the capacity to release the head teacher, core subject leads and other key teachers for training in Assessment for Learning (AfL) and pupil progress tracking. We are working with the National Strategies, the Qualifications and Curriculum Council and the National Assessment Agency to design support and establish whole school teaching and learning policies and systems. The basis for the training will be the existing materials and support available through the National Strategies. Universal support will be available to all teachers and school leaders from this year through the National Strategies. In future years support will be differentiated capitalising on the work of schools with leading practice and intensifying support to schools who need it.

New specialist training units to improve trainee teachers' SEN skills and the skills needed to remove the barriers to learning and participation for disabled children have been piloted successfully with primary undergraduate initial teacher training and will be rolled out to course providers this summer. We are now beginning to develop similar units for secondary training courses. Training resources are also being developed for serving teachers.

The NPQH has been redesigned as a programme for aspiring heads who can demonstrate that they are ready, capable and motivated to take on the challenges of headship. The NCSL will be piloting the redesigned NPQH in March 2008. We have also asked the NCSL to conduct a radical review of all its programmes for current and aspiring leaders to ensure that we have the very best provision to develop our leaders.

Making teaching a Masters level profession

In the Children's Plan we set out our ambition to build on the talents of our teachers by making teaching a Masters level profession. This represents a significant investment in the future development of the school workforce which will help to deliver the very best teaching and learning to our children and young people, boost the status of the teaching profession still further and bring us into line with the highest performing education systems in the world.

We will be asking the TDA to develop our plans, working with social partners, and to lead on delivery.

The following are the key points that will inform this work as it goes forward.

Why do it:

- Our aim is to raise standards, narrow the achievement gap and give children better life chances. Further improving the quality of teaching and learning is key to our ability to do this.
- We intend to create a new Masters level qualification that will boost the quality of teaching needed to improve the achievement of all pupils. It will also help meet the needs of a 21st century profession working in 21st Century Schools as set out in the Children's Plan. It will rightly further advance the status of the profession making it an even more attractive career option, both for those at university and for the increasing number of those who choose teaching as a second career.

Who is it for?

- We propose to begin by targeting MTL mainly on teachers in the first 5 years of their careers building on ITT and induction. We must ensure that the MTL provides significant additional support to teachers through induction and the early years of their career by providing a better and more structured approach for their early professional development. The development of MTL provides an opportunity to address the concerns that some teachers have about their experience of induction.
- We want the programme to be an attractive option for all parts of the profession – teachers and head teachers – who are in a position to update and strengthen their skills. As we develop the programme we will want to consider how it relates to the review of the professional standards for school leaders and the NPQH. We will also want to consider with partners how teachers in mid-career could participate in the programme.

What is it like?

- The new programme is intended to develop and improve teacher quality. We want it to build on the 'New Professionalism' agenda we have developed with social partners. This respects teachers as highly skilled individuals who make judgements and exercise professional autonomy in the classroom within a clear framework of accountability, as leaders of teaching and learning and as learners who engage in professional development throughout their careers.
- The programme would be practice-based and only available to practising teachers. We envisage a modular programme which might include a mix of core and elective modules which could progressively build on each other. These could be taken at any point during the first 5 years of teaching but ideally might be completed within a 3 year period to help to ensure coherence and progression and to make it easier to provide continuity of support. Masters level study completed in a PGCE year and other Masters level activities, including elements of other relevant Masters provision, should be able to count towards it where they meet agreed rigorous national criteria. Modules might cover a range of areas, such as: subject knowledge and subject pedagogy, SEN and disability, assessment for learning and personalisation of teaching and learning, early years, teaching in complex school settings (those facing challenging circumstances), behaviour management, and integrated working within the children's workforce. All will develop practice through enquiry and use of evidence.
- The programme would need to be sufficiently flexible to be personalised to reflect each participants' learning needs. Performance management arrangements would provide the context for identifying professional development priorities, including the selection of elective modules.

How is it delivered?

- Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) would validate that the programme is genuinely at Masters level and provide a tutor for each participant who would have the lead role in assessing progress. The programme would be primarily school-based with schools collaborating with HEIs in joint delivery.
- Teachers in schools would act as coaches for each participant and be responsible for providing coaching and for arranging appropriate classroom-based activities – either in the participant’s own school, in a partner school or other learning setting. This might build on existing coaching and mentoring roles and should represent a significant investment in coaching and mentoring capacity in schools, strengthening the support available to all teachers in undertaking CPD.
- We intend to explore how more experienced teachers who are trained and act as in-school coaches to other teachers on the MTL programme could have their role recognised as part of their own achievement of MTL. Becoming a coach might be especially attractive for teachers aspiring to Excellent Teacher or Advanced Skill Teacher status.
- Participants would be expected to undertake some study in their own time.

How is it funded?

- We envisage that costs will be met by the TDA and cover programme development and HEIs’ ongoing costs, the costs of training school-based coaches, and costs incurred by schools in releasing staff to be trained and to act as coaches.
- The programme should also be available to more experienced teachers currently in the profession. We will want to review the funding arrangements for teachers who do not take up the opportunity to participate in the programme in the early years of their career, but then wish to join it.
- Because of the critical link between high quality teaching and improvement in standards, we would like to explore how the funding arrangements might incentivise take-up of MTL in schools facing challenging circumstances and participation in particular modules where these reflect key priorities for the training of the school workforce.
- In considering how the MTL can be made available to mid-career teachers we would also like to explore different approaches to funding, including the circumstances in which teachers and/or schools might make a contribution to the costs.
- As the programme develops, we will want to keep all aspects of funding under review.

What are the consequences for the individual?

- Participants on the programme should emerge with higher levels of skills in developing their teaching practice, leading to improved teaching and learning. They should also be in a much stronger position to respond to the demands of a changing society and of the ever more complex demands placed on the teaching profession in the 21st Century School. The precise way in which the outcomes of the programme are used would depend on the circumstances of each teacher and should inform performance management and professional development discussions. We have said in the Children's Plan that we will want to review the effectiveness of the new performance management arrangements, and we will want to factor into that the impact of the introduction of MTL, including the funding arrangements. We aim to do this by 2013.
- The increased levels of knowledge, understanding and skills and the development of professional attributes that the programme provides should also mean teachers with the MTL are well placed to demonstrate professional standards at a higher level in support of applications to cross the threshold or to be assessed as Excellent Teachers or Advanced Skills Teachers. But there is no direct link to pay or progression decisions. No teacher would be penalised for not having a Masters level qualification. We envisage that as more teachers gain MTL we would expect this to be a factor when employers are recruiting.

What are the consequences for the school?

- There would be significant benefits for schools – the trained coaches could make a wider contribution to induction, training and development across the school and the MTL should serve to support an increasingly collaborative culture in professional development. Retention should be improved, especially in the early years. More broadly, the systematised development of an enquiry and evidence driven way of working will bring about an even more highly professionalised workforce capable of delivering even better outcomes for children and young people.
- As above, for schools with complex and challenging circumstances, we would like to explore how the funding arrangements might incentivise the take-up of MTL in these schools and other ways in which the MTL might benefit them. For example, some of the modules within the programme might be designed to enable teachers in schools facing the most challenging circumstances to explore the particular issues faced by such schools or enable MTL participants who are not in these schools to work collaboratively with teachers from schools facing challenging circumstances or undertake secondments in these schools.

What happens next?

- The TDA will be asked to start developing the programme working with and through social partners, and to consult widely as they do so. At this stage we anticipate that the MTL might start to become available to entrants to PGCE teacher training programmes from September 2008 and options would start to become available for entrants on other routes as soon as possible.
- We will need to explore, with partners, how we ensure that all those who wish to participate in the scheme can be assured that they will have an equal opportunity to do so.

The introduction of the MTL represents a significant new investment in the skills of the school workforce and will help us to achieve a workforce that is truly world class.

Conclusion

The best teachers, school leaders and support staff constantly seek to improve and develop their skills and subject knowledge. Ongoing engagement in effective CPD is at the heart of our plans for unlocking the talent of the school workforce and we will continue to make a significant investment in developing the knowledge and skills of the school workforce. As signalled in the Children's Plan, a key part of this is our ambition that teaching should become a Masters level profession and we are committed to working with social partners to achieve this goal.

These are our latest plans to support and unlock the talents of the school workforce so the school workforce can unlock the talents of our children. We are committed to working with the school workforce as we develop and deliver them, consulting further on specific issues as we do so.

The social partnership for school workforce reform will be at the heart of this process and help to ensure we get it right.

We have big ambitions for children. We need to be equally ambitious for the school workforce that works with them. We already have a high quality school workforce. Our aim is that it should be the best.

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